THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. April 2, 1943 Adar II, 26, 5703 No. 4

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EDITORIALS

PETAIN HAS GONE; THE VICHYITES REMAIN

THE situation in North Africa is becoming increasingly complicated as the erstwhile Vichyites are discovering that they cannot continue to rule without at least paying lip service to democracy. Today, democratic public opinion is puzzled by Giraud's latest step, which is hardly understandable to people who think in terms of "either or," democracy or fascism. Why was the abolition of the racial laws in Algeria accompanied by the disfranchisement of the overwhelming majority of its Jewish population through the abolition of the Crémieux Decree? We cannot accept the excuse of the possibility of an Arab revolt. True, Arabs have protested against their inequality with the Frenchmen in their own country. And naturally, reactionary Frenchmen have always attempted to channelize these protests into anti-Jewish sentiments and action. But no one acquainted with the history of Arab-Jewish relations in Algeria will for a moment take seriously the Vichyite apologia that the insurrections of 1871-72 were an expression of Moslem dissatisfaction with the Crémieux Decree. Similarly, no earnest student of the situation today will believe that there is a serious threat of Arab uprisings in Algeria, if Jews are to retain their French citizenship.

As a matter of fact, it is the French ledger in North Africa rather than the Moslem record that has to be examined. Anti-Semitism has had a long history in Algeria and its main bearers have been Frenchmen. To mention but one, Henri Drummond. Jewish equality has always been a thorn in the flesh of the French middle classes in Algeria. Opposition to it reached its high point during the Dreyfus Affair. Vichy picked up the thread of this venomous policy. For it is a mistake to suppose that Petain and his partners in crime carried out racial legislation *only* because of Nazi pressure. On the contrary, these reactionaries, suddenly turned democratic today, have never been satisfied with the fruits of the French Revolution and the existence of the Third Republic. The Dreyfus Affair was their dress rehearsal; the establishment of the Vichy regime was the real show. And we must remember that Giraud and his companions are true children of Vichy. To be anti-German does not imply being anti-fascist. The very painful gradualness of the abandonment of the outer trappings of Vichy ideology on the part

of the North African regime is a proof of this contention. It does not signify a true conversion to the ideals of democracy or the Third Republic.

It is to this fascist outlook that we can trace the continuation of anti-Jewish sentiments in North Africa. It is difficult for those who gained most in property and position to give up willingly their ill-gotten gains. In addition, Jews have always voted the liberal tickets and they form about ten percent of the French population. A free election in Algeria with Jewish participation would probably result in dislodging the administration and its anti-Semitic civil service. This is one true reason for the abolition of the Crémieux Decree. To liberals, Giraud's anti-Jewish legislation should prove that fascism cannot be appeased. Its vested interests do not permit it to make basic concessions to equality. To Jews it ought to prove that Jewish rights have again been sacrificed by the democracies under the guise of a "war necessity." The Algeria incident may serve as a precedent for similar action in other places. It is conceivable that the democracies may "temporarily" yield on Jewish rights in Germany and other countries, giving the excuse that such action is a temporary sacrifice in order to educate these people for democracy without bringing in such painful and deterrent factors as the Jewish question. To all, it ought to teach the lesson that the barometer of equal rights for Jews and Gentiles is still the true instrument for measuring the degree of egalitarianism of any social order or government.

FAITH AND MORALE

A RESURGENCE of religious interest is now in process within Germany—so reports the Religious News Service on the basis of a study of German newspapers and periodical journals. Thus at least one Berlin daily has adopted the practice of publishing a column of religious discussion akin to the traditional type. Editorials on belief and its relation to the problems of human living appear with increasing frequency. That a revival of faith should occur in Germany at the present time is not difficult to understand. The Germans find themselves *in extremis.* The mounting volume of casualties, particularly on the Eastern front, the deepening privation, the cumulative misery and homelessness caused by air raids, the dawning apprehension of defeat and the progressive sense of guilt and responsibility for vast errors and infinite sins—all these are psychic conditions naturally conducive to a return to interest in matters of religious import.

But what is especially interesting in the German situation is the fact that the Nazi regime encourages this development. Not that it has abandoned its old hostility to Christianity. This goes on unabated. But the Nazis have discovered that their own religion of blood and soil, their pagan, nationalistic faith is not enough. And now, in the crisis, they are trying frenziedly to improvise something which resembles Christianity, without being Christian.

For theirs is an extraordinary problem. They ask of the German people vast sacrifices. As sanction and justification for these sacrifices they advance the interests of the German nation. But the individual who might find national advantage sufficient warrant for less rigorous demands finds it inadequate for the fearsome exactions made of him. Will the survival of the German people, he asks, keep the life lost in the Ukraine from being wasted? And wherein lies the supreme worth of the German nation that so much should be sacrificed for it? People, in other words, are challenging the Nazi table of values which is predicated on

blood and soil. And the Nazis perforce must find a deeper system of values to which to appeal. Willy-nilly, they must advance some construction of the cosmos in the light of which self-negation on the part of German men and women may appear reasonable. Their misfortune is that they cannot return to Christianity. That, however, is an impossibility. For Christian ethic is too closely associated with the Christian *Weltanschauung*. And with Christian morality Nazism cannot come to terms. To be sure there is a specifically Christian revival afoot in Germany. Against this, however, the Nazis have of necessity arrayed themselves. They have no choice then except to create a cosmic outlook akin to the Christian but without Christian moral implications. For—as they have discovered—blood, soil, and nation, while they may be a stopgap sanction for human morale, are not enough ultimately. Men need a cosmic orientation.

We relate all this not because we are sorry for the Nazis and the spiritual impasse into which they have worked themselves, but because this incident bears out a point which we have made recurrently —namely that a life faith, to be equal to the demands of man's morale and morality, must be rooted in the cosmos itself—nothing less will do.

This means that we are certain the Russians must someday again turn to religion, that when the period of preoccupation with creation and experiment is over, when men once again have leisure for reflection, they will ask inevitably the age-old questions, and will respond with the classic answers.

This means too that we expect a similar development among the secularist *Halutzim* in Palestine.

This means, last of all, that our democracy will not be firm in tone or morality unless it too derives from nothing less than a world-faith.

The Nazi experiment of finding sanctions in the state for the life of the individual is only one, most extreme, instance of a widespread phenomenon. As Aldous Huxley has pointed out in his "Ends and Means," modern men have been very busy contriving substitutes for God as a fountainhead of human morale and as a warrant for morality. They have have tried the state, the proletariat, art for art's sake, and what not.

The experience of the Nazis is another confirmation of our oft-repeated thesis—that only a world outlook and a God-world-outlook at that—will prove permanently adequate as source and sanction for courage and the good life.

AN APPEAL FOR ZIONIST UNITY

IN the *New Palestine* of March 19 there appears a statement by Judge Louis E. Levinthal, President of the Zionist Organization of America, which was occasioned by the recent publication, in the *New York Times,* of an advertisement by the New Zionist Organization of America. The statement calls attention to the confusion caused by the similarity of that organization's name to the name of the Z.O.A. It also makes the point that, unlike the Z.O.A., the new organization has no affiliation with the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for Palestine, does not participate in the United Palestine Appeal, and does not assume any responsibility for the Keren Hayesod and Keren Kayemet, the instruments of the World Zionist Organization for the development of the Jewish National Home.

The confusion created by the name is widespread and is detrimental to the aims which all true Zionists have at heart. Whatever good works the New Zionist Organization may have achieved, and we

may credit it with having stimulated a wide interest in the problem of a Jewish army for Palestine and in the plight of European Jewry, it is clearly undesirable that people should imagine they are supporting the political and economic instruments of organized Zionism when they support the N.Z.O.

The confusion, however, is not caused merely by a similarity of names. It is a necessary consequence of the very existence of a group that professes the same aims as the World Zionist Organization but is not a part of it. People who are solicited for support of the one organization or the other are not apprised of ideological differences between them. The existence of an organized group of Zionists who are not affiliated with the W.Z.O. gives the impression of a radical incapacity for democratic action on the part of Zionists and, by implication, an incapacity of the Jewish people for self-government. This weakens the movement in its relation to the outside world, gives comfort and aid to enemies of Zion within and without the ranks of Jewry, and presents an intolerable situation to all true lovers of Zion.

Some time ago negotiations were conducted between the Jewish Army Committee and the Zionist Emergency Committee, but they apparently broke down; why, we do not know. In view of the tragic crisis through which world-Jewry is passing, these negotiations should be resumed. Every possibility of bringing the New Zionist Organization back into the World Zionist Organization must be explored.

But unless and until the New Zionist Organization submits to the discipline of the W.Z.O., individual Zionists as well as Zionist organizations cannot recognize it as legitimate, and should refrain from contributing to its funds. The democratic principle in Zionism demands submission to the will of the majority as expressed by the Congress. If every group that may find itself overruled in the Congress should secede and try to implement its policy independently, the whole movement would disintegrate. Democracy recognizes the rights of minority groups to freedom of discussion, but not to secession or refusal to abide by decisions of the majority on matters which affect the public interest as a whole.

The Revisionists originally seceded from the W.Z.O., because they felt that the leadership of the movement was, at the time, too ready to whittle down the conception of the Jewish National Home to a degree that constituted, in effect, a repudiation of Herzlian Zionism. That view, whether correct or not, did not, in our opinion, justify secession. The responsibility for deciding what interpretation should be put on the terms of the Basle Platform, the official platform of the Zionist movement, rests on the movement as a whole and not on any one group within it. But even if one considers the secession of the Revisionists justified on those grounds, there would be no justification for a refusal on their part to rejoin the W.Z.O. at the present time. For the World Zionist Organization is today committed to the policy of the Biltmore Resolutions, which calls for free Jewish immigration into Palestine and a Jewish Commonwealth after the war.

We can understand the impatience of the New Zionists with the slow pace of Zionist action in certain directions. They themselves have shown commendable zeal and initiative. But it must be borne in mind that self-constituted groups responsible to none but themselves can always act with greater dispatch than any democracy which must reckon with a heterogeneous body of public opinion. That is why totalitarian powers always give the impression of more dynamic efficiency than democracies. But if we have faith

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REALITIES AND VALUES

On April 9-10, Conservative congregations throughout the country will observe Palestine Sabbath. This is the answer of the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue to the efforts of the American Council for Judaism to identify Jewish religion with anti-Zionism. A special ritual has been prepared for the occasion. But the congregations are expressing their identification with the cause of Zion not only in ritual terms. They have been asked to adopt pro-Zionist resolutions and to appoint Palestine Committees which shall be charged with the all-year-round task of stimulating and guiding the interest of the congregation in the upbuilding of Palestine. Some congregations have affiliated their entire membership with the Z.O.A. Others are engaged in establishing an affiliated Zionist unit within the congregation. An affirmative response to the demand for a concrete expression of loyalty to Zionism has been virtually unanimous. The *New Palestine* in its issue of March 19, comments on the significance of this action of the Conservative rabbinate (the laity should have been included in view of the United Synagogue's participation) for the Zionist movement. Of no less importance, however, is the significance of that action for the synagogue itself. It means that the synagogue is reasserting its role of guiding Jewish communal life and is no longer satisfied with merely preaching platitudes, teaching Bible stories and maintaining traditional rituals.

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Addressing the conference of the Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation of Palestine, David Remez called attention to its social security system "which is more just and more progressive than the Beveridge plan in England." In referring to the post-war problem created by the necessity of bringing back Palestinian industry from a war to a peace basis, he anticipated that, if matters were left to themselves, there would be a grave unemployment problem. But he announced that the Histadrut was prepared, if necessary, to take over many industrial enterprises and save Jewish industry from possible disaster. Both statements are highly significant of the spirit of Palestine Jewish labor. Without government aid or the power to tax, labor in Palestine has, on its own initiative, set up a comprehensive social security system. Its

initiative and enterprise lead it to assume the responsibilities usually undertaken by the capitalist entrepreneur. Instead of being organized as labor is in most other countries to exact better terms from private capital, it is organized to make itself independent of private capital when the latter cannot run industry profitably for all concerned. It has discovered that cooperative labor can create capital, and that industrial democracy need not remain a mere name.

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THE JEWISH WELFARE BOARD has published an interesting release on some of the new activities of the Detroit Jewish Center. Detroit, by reason of its many war industries, is confronted with problems created by the large influx of new workers into the city. The Detroit Jewish Center, in a report to the J.W.B., the parent organization of over 300 Jewish Y's and Community Centers, suggests a six-point program of activities designed to meet the needs of the Jewish newcomers to the city, as well as those of the women and girls of all ages who have been left without male companionship, and who, "despite the fact that they may be doing excellently in Civilian Defense activities, . . . feel their lives are empty." The following is the Center's program: (1) An information bureau to answer local questions and facilitate acquaintanceship with the Center and the Community, (2) contacting government agencies and personnel directors to get them to inform Jewish newcomers of facilities offered by the Center, (3) to do the same with unions and union officials, (4) to set up a dating bureau in conjunction with an information desk, (5) to conduct a room registry and post information of all activities taking place in the city, (6) to make the Center a place where personal hospitality is offered on a basis similar to that given soldiers. The Detroit Jewish Center is to be commended for recognizing the problems, dealing with them and publicising its plans for use by other Centers.

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JEWS MUST HATE FASCISM, even when fascism is not particularly anti-Semitic. Otherwise the friends of democracy will wonder whether the Jews are truly democratic, or whether they are interested only in their own skins. In Jersey City, New Jersey, the relations between Mayor Hague and the Jewish community have again reached the newspapers. Governor Edison, Hague's bitter enemy, recently intimated that Jews permit themselves to remain under the thumb of the political boss; and now comes word that Dr. Guy Emory Shipler, editor of the Churchman, withdrew as a speaker at a "Stop Hitler" rally because the meeting was billed as "non-political," and references to local manifestations of fascist leanings were going to be avoided. Said Dr. Shipler: "Fascism must be stopped; not Hitler alone. And it must be stopped, among other places and emphatically, in Jersey City." Dr. Shipler is right; we hope that the Jews of that community will not hesitate, as liberal Christians in Germany did not hesitate, to stand up for the right, even at the risk of incurring the wrath of a political dictator.

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THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, meeting on March 16, approved a three-point program to enlist the concern of the Christian community in the United States over the fate of European Jews. Twenty-five of the larger groups of the country were represented. The first proposal will be to inform the American churches of all the facts. The second is to back all measures for rescuing Jews now in jeopardy. Specifically, the Committee recommends supporting refugees in neutral lands for

the duration, and finding temporary havens for those not yet rescued. The third recommendation is that May 2 be observed in churches as a "Day of Compassion," and that Christians pray "that God, in His mercy, may open the way for the deliverance of the Jewish people; that the hearts of all Christian people may be stirred to active compassion for the suffering of the Jews; that Christians in America may steadfastly oppose all tendencies to anti-Semitism in our own country, that the spirit of racial goodwill and justice may be greatly strengthened among men throughout the world." The statement is a heartening message from fellow-Americans.

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In our last issue we condemned the attitude of Jews in public life who, like Robert Moses, are so fearful of showing a pro-Jewish bias that they close their hearts to all humane considerations when it comes to American hospitality to refugees from abroad. Happily not all Jews in public life are infected with Robert Moses' timorous and cold-hearted isolationism. There is, for example, Congressman Emanuel Celler who, in addressing a conference called by the United Rumanian Jews of America, condemned the "chilly formalism" in the immigration regulations of the United States and pleaded for a liberalization of our immigration laws

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Al Segal is probably the most widely read columnist in the Anglo-Jewish press, and that is why we take the trouble to inform him that lighthearted, easy-going, and casual conversation, carried on in his column, is not the way to deal with problems that tear at the hearts of Jews these days. Al Segal is all for "relaxing." He doesn't see why Jews should get excited . . . especially Zionists. He may say the most exasperating things, but his opponents must not raise their voices. Keep calm. In a recent column, he tells of an encounter with a Zionist in a sweat room of a gym. Segal leaned back and let the sweat room do its work. The Zionist, on the other hand, was in another kind of sweat—a cold sweat, for he could not help thinking about his fellow Jews. We are not much concerned with Segal's opinions. We are concerned with his misplaced whimsy, viz.: "I could not get angry with my Zionist brother and could only feel sorry at his spoiling his sweat bath in this way." To paraphrase Maurice Samuel's *bon mot*: You don't have to be coldblooded to be a non-Zionist, but it helps.

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This month has been designated as Hebrew Month and is being devoted by the Histadruth Ivrith to an intensive campaign for stimulating an interest among American Jews in the problem of promoting Hebrew culture in America. They are wisely not limiting themselves to appealing to those who already possess an adequate knowledge of Hebrew. They realize that the continuance of Hebrew as a living language is indispensable to Judaism, that a Hebrewless Judaism is doomed from the start. True, the Jews of the diaspora cannot be expected to use Hebrew to any extent as a vernacular. But that does not mean that its scope need be confined to a stereotyped and meaningless ritual. The sound instinct of the Jewish people made of Hebrew *leshon hakodesh,* a sacred language, which it was a religious duty of every Jew to learn to the extent of his capacity and to teach to his children. If we recognize in the Hebrew language a weapon necessary to Jewish survival, or, better still, if we see in it a vitamin necessary to Jewish living, we shall find the means by which at least educated Jews can make themselves at home in the Hebrew language and literature.

Franz Werfel's Journey

By ISRAEL KNOX

FRANZ WERFEL needs no introduction to American readers. He is widely known as the author of "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh." Several of his other books have also appeared in English translation. He is a serious and high-minded writer, and his works—in their entirety—seem to disclose a unifying pattern and purpose. In the personal preface to his latest book, "The Song of Bernadette," he tells us something about this purpose: "Even in the days when I wrote my first verses I vowed that I would evermore and everywhere in all I wrote magnify the divine mystery and the holiness of man—careless of a period which has turned away with scorn and rage and indifference from these ultimate values of our mortal lot." "The Song of Bernadette" fits into this procession, is a part—perhaps the fulfillment—of this plan. To understand this plan it is necessary to recall briefly some of his preceding books.

Forty Days of Musa Dagh

In "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh" Werfel dealt with a theme at once noble and significant. The book is the chronicle of a people's agony during the First World War. It is said that Werfel's name is revered among Armenians. His tale has taken on in their country the character of a priceless national treasure. But "The Forty Days" is more than a story of a people's suffering and hope for *physical* survival. It is also, after a fashion, Gabriel's autobiography, that is to say, the story of a man of deep spiritual perceptions, of thought and contemplation, of one who must discover the *why* and *wherefore* of things. And Gabriel's tragedy is that he is compelled to act before he has fathomed the *why* and *wherefore* of that which he must do. Gabriel saves his people, and their salvation becomes his undoing. His dying is not like the dying of Jordan in Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls"; Gabriel has not yet learned that the bell that tolls for him tolls for all; he has not yet become attuned to Wordsworth's "still, sad music of humanity." Gabriel's sensibilities are fine and his vision is far-reaching; they serve him in the market-place and fail him on the hill-top. For from the hill-top the landscape stretches farther and farther and the horizon is more remote; and the sense of the "ultimate values of our mortal lot" is sharpened. On the hill-top, that is to say, on Musa Dagh, the eternal hunger for the meaning of things gets hold of Gabriel; and since no answer for them is at hand, Gabriel walks half-wittingly towards his death.

Hearken Unto The Voice

In his next book, "Hearken Unto the Voice," Werfel is preoccupied solely with this hunger, this quest for "ultimate values." The answer is suggested in a simple and wonderful episode which is the heart of the book and the reason for its name. It is, as far as the subject-matter is concerned, a story of Jeremiah, the ancient Hebrew prophet, and his times. In this episode Jeremiah goes to Zedekiah, king of Judea, to remind him that, in accordance with Jewish law, it behooves him to liberate the slaves upon completion of seven years of bondage. Zedekiah listens to Jeremiah with awe and replies something like this: "I am eager, Jeremiah, to comply with your

wish. But as you know, our people is fighting a powerful and pitiless enemy, Babylonia; and if I liberate the slaves, their masters, the war-lords who are also the landlords, will rebel against me and our cause will be lost. You see how it is—don't you?—there is, alas, nothing I can do. . . ." After a moment's meditation, Jeremiah sorrowfully says something like the following to the king: "You are arguing with me as man with man and you probably expect to strike a bargain with me, to make some sort of compromise. But you are mistaken in this—the lips are mine and the tongue is mine but the voice is not mine; the voice is the Voice of God. . . ." Now what in our language and thinking is this voice of God? It is the voice of our conscience, and that is the voice of our cumulative heritage—the spiritual heritage of mankind. Jeremiah's reply, his emphasis upon "ultimate values," upon the "divine mystery and holiness of man," upon the ethical conduct of life—of the life of the individual and of the group—is no easy answer, no simple remedy, no ready-made panacea. It is perhaps more a *regulative* than a *specific* answer to Gabriel's query, meant to serve more as a pillar of fire in the desert, as a clarion call in the night than as an exhaustive catalogue of appropriate deeds or as a detailed catechism. And therein lies its wisdom and its worth. It charts a difficult course; it acknowledges the complexity of living. Were it an easy formula, it would be specious and counterfeit, a surrogate for life.

Embezzled Heaven

Apparently Werfel himself was frightened by the difficulty and the complexity of this regulative answer to Gabriel's questions; his own strength must have ebbed away and he could not continue hearkening unto *this* voice. In "Embezzled Heaven" Werfel's theme, as well as his problem, is still the same, but the quality of his solution is no longer the same. It represents a kind of inverted alchemy whereby the purer metals are transmuted into the cheaper ones.

For this too is a tale of the hunger for integrity, for oneness with this universe which is our home and hence must be invested with meaningfulness, if we are to live in it as rational human beings and are not to cry out with Macbeth:

". . . *It is a tale*
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing."

The hunger is real and the quest is indubitable but the food he offers us is sawdust and the haven is insubstantial and shadowy. It is the story of an old servant-woman, neither kind nor wise, and not even profoundly religious, if we interpret that to be a state wherein we are, in St. Paul's phrase, "members one of another," or, in Kant's utterance, aware of our "fellowship with essence," wherein we are made cognizant of our common brotherhood under the fatherhood of God. This woman's religion is a-moral and a-social and moves on the plane of superstition; it is unillumined by understanding and not pierced to its core by intuition; it is "faith" quite unspoiled and unadulterated. This woman lavishes her life's savings upon a stupid and malicious nephew, whom she neither sees nor loves, on condition that he become a priest and celebrate for her the Mass "evermore and everywhere." Despite disappointment and deception practiced upon her, she achieves salvation wrought out of the material of her unbending faith. In contrast to her, Werfel exhibits the disintegration of her master's family who worshipped at the clay feet of the modern gods—liberalism, progress, reason.

The danger of the book is not that heaven is embezzled; it is that the earth—*our* earth—is embezzled. It is not that he gives us an answer and it is surely not that he gives us—to use his own favorite terminology—a metaphysical and religious answer. It is that he gives us an altogether too easy answer, much too easy for a world and a generation in turmoil and transformation, in bitter need of light and compassion and intelligence, that must truly glimpse the "ultimate values of our mortal lot" in order to overcome the titanic perversion, the satanic heresy, the anti-human crusade of our age which is fascism; and that must rise to the full realization of the "divine mystery and the holiness of man" by becoming the architects of a world suitable for man, for his body and for his spirit which at least on earth is inseparable from his body and has exalted it by choosing it as its abode.

The Song of Bernadette

Werfel's latest book, "The Song of Bernadette," runs in the same vein. In the preface he informs us that he came upon its theme inadvertently. As the Nazis were overrunning France, Werfel, an Austrian Jewish exile, was trying to escape to Spain. He was stopped at the border and found refuge in the French town of Lourdes. His life was, of course, in jeopardy; and had he been caught, there would have been no way out. While in hiding, he learned a good deal about Bernadette Soubirous and the miracles that are associated with her name. He resolved that if he should get to America, he would lift this legend above the incidence of time and place and reveal its inner shining jewel, its enduring worth as an affirmation of spirit. And so it is true that, if Werfel had not stayed in Lourdes, the story of Bernadette and the miracle whose vessel she was, would have remained unwritten and unsung. But if Bernadette was the instrument of a miracle, this miracle was also the instrument of Werfel's own—perhaps final—vision. Had not this vessel and instrument been available, he would have found other ones to body forth his vision.

In "Embezzled Heaven" Werfel turned from the voice of God as the voice of conscience and our human heritage to a "faith" that is practical and below—not above — reason, to an answer that is easier—not more difficult—than the answer suggested by Jeremiah's admonition: "hearken unto the voice." He now turns to an answer that is meant to be mystical and of the spirit and yet is conditioned by the physical and the material because it clothes the spiritual and ideal with a crude corporeal vestment. The answer to Gabriel's insistent self-questioning is now supremely easy; believe strongly enough, and that which you believe will be real; and you will be able to stand alone against the world, and you will be saved. Werfel is deeply concerned with this happening that caused a stir eighty years ago, and he is not concerned with it as an event in history. He holds it to be a miracle in spirit and outside of time, since it is a miracle of belief, but he resorts to a miracle in nature and in time to serve as the ground and the cause and the object of the miracle of belief. Werfel is thus magnifying "the divine mystery and holiness of man"; he is thus pointing out the "ultimate values of our mortal lot" in an age which has averted its face from them "with scorn and rage and indifference." It is strange that Werfel, whose escape was rendered possible by the miracle of concrete and ascertainable human goodness and self-sacrifice, should fail to envisage his "ultimate values" as springing from the soil of such goodness and loving-kindness but should wed them to *crypto-*

materialistic miracles and should set up as their destination and terminus the *private* world of faith.

"The Song of Bernadette" is the song of a child-saint and the miracle that befell her. It is the song of little Bernadette Soubirous, one of four children, born to simple poor folk in Southern France. Bernadette suffered from chronic asthma, was held to be stupid by friends and by her teacher and was at the bottom of her class. And then in 1858 when Bernadette was fourteen years old, she saw in one of the deserted grottos, on a rock at the mouth of a cave, a beautiful lady dressed in white with a blue girdle and golden roses on her bare feet. The lady bade her visit the grotto for fifteen days, and Bernadette on beholding and talking to her was indescribably happy and her face and being were transformed and lighted up as with a heavenly bliss. And then, one day a spring gushed forth in the cave and its water proved to be wondrously healing; a blind man was able to see by washing his eyes with it, a dying child was cured of its fatal illness by being immersed in it. And the rest of the story is the tender, touching record of the girl's devotion to "the lady" and her quiet brave clinging to the truth as she knew it. Slowly, doubt and chicanery melt away in the warmth of her belief and she wins over her parents, her townsfolk, the *curé,* a doctor, and finally the Church. She then withdraws to a nunnery, humble and simple as ever, and dies in her mid-thirties, of tuberculosis of the bones.

What shall we say of this? What shall we say of Werfel's journey as artist and philosopher from the "Forty Days" to the "Song of Bernadette"? There is no denying that in the present struggle Werfel is on the side of man and man's freedom and dignity. In an article in a recent issue of *Commonweal* he calls his book a "polemic of this war," a contribution to the defense of man's holiness and spirit. And yet it is plain—is it not?—that the battle for freedom can be won and out of the chaos that has engulfed us some order can be shaped, only if we bring to bear understanding and reasoned thinking upon the problems of our destiny. And this too is clear: victory will be achieved, not only on the immediate field of battle but in the lasting sphere of social and moral experience, by summoning all our energy and effort for this victory, indeed, by spilling our blood —as we are now doing—for that sacred end. What meaning can the dialectic of a story of a miracle have as translated into the speech of our generation's anguish and aspiration? Its meaning and its message would seem to be that we yield up hard thinking for easy believing and the righteous fight for sweet and calm passivity.

AN APPEAL FOR ZIONIST UNITY

(*Continued from Page* 6)

in democracy we must accept its risks. Let the New Zionist Organization seek the status of a party within the Zionist movement, if they still feel that they have a *raison d'être,* but let them not sin against the disciplined loyalty which all Zionists owe to the organized movement as a whole. Zionism cannot today afford the luxury of a multiplicity of independent organizations. Revisionists and regular Zionists must get together on the basis of loyalty to the fundamental principles of Zionism and the essential interests of the Jewish people.

We Are History

By MAX WIENER

The Traditional Jewish Conception of Learning

JUDAISM has never glorified the poor in spirit. An *am ha-aretz,* an ignorant person, cannot be pious. Correct fulfilment of the *mitzvot* requires knowledge. Thus a religious deed has to be based on learning.

A law-abiding Jew has always seen in study more than a theoretical treatment of Torah. Even if he is engrossed with such sections of the Talmud as evidently cannot be applied to present life, he is performing a pious deed and not merely engaged in an intellectual pursuit, for the *mitzvah* is an honor, not a burden. When Messiah comes and restores Israel's freedom, the whole Law in its full splendor will rule again over the redeemed people.

The source of such a belief is clear. Revealed religion cannot change. God has spoken once for all. His word is everlasting, and so is the authorized interpretation of this word.

The Jewish "Wissenschaft" Conception

When in the nineteenth century the traditional idea was weakened or even collapsed among the bulk of Western Jewry, a new concept of learning emerged. The *"Wissenschaft des Judentums"* was not research *for the sake of fulfilment,* but study *in order to acquire knowledge.* Once an *am ha-aretz* could not be a *hasid,* a pious person; henceforth a learned man needed not be. We are not interested in the disparate methods of the two kinds of learning, the one based upon tradition, the other on critical analysis. What we wish to characterize here is the change of the relations between life and knowledge which started with the modern idea of Jewish learning.

About 120 years ago, Leopold Zunz wanted all Jewish books to be collected because he was afraid that by another century all these books would have disappeared. This demand is significant. Judaism was supposed to be nearing the end of its history. It is by the evening twilight that the bird of Minerva begins its flight. True, Zunz's pessimism did not become the guiding star of all who followed his invitation to uncover the literary sources of our spirit. But there is no doubt that this trend of mind determined a program: the only scholarship that the leaders of Jewish science considered as real, as a "serious contribution" to Jewish study, was *historical research.*

It was the inclination to philology that dominated and virtually pushed aside all other aspects of learning. The great German philologist, August Boeckh, characterized the task of philology as "cognition of cognition." Indeed, every one who has mind enough to appreciate the achievements of other people's minds will admit the importance and vastness of that task. But the "cognition of cognition" has to be preceded and accompanied by the insight that there is a life which underlies all cognition and is developing from the past through the present into the boundless future. The lack of such a belief led the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to immerse itself in mere antiquarianism. No sensible man will belittle the splendor of the accomplishments by which Zunz, Rappaport, S. D. Luzzatto, Derenburg, Jost, Munk, Dukes, Geiger, Graetz, Manuel Joel, Steinschneider, and many other scholars shed light on the history of the Jewish spirit and the circumstances of Jewish life. It would also be unjust to blame them for having seen the past only from a theological angle. Zunz's

program, which conceived of Judaism as an essential contributor to all fields of human activities, was by no means narrow, nor did it remain an empty shell. But it was *Historism,* that is to say an attitude which, consciously or unconsciously, deemed the creative power of the Jewish community exhausted. It resembled the soul of an old man in that it lived on reminiscence only and had neither the hope nor even the will to bequeath to posterity the memory of a truly active life of its own.

Exceptions That Proved the Rule

Of course, there were certain exceptions among the personalities we have listed. Abraham Geiger was not only an excellent critic, but he also attempted, on the basis of his discoveries, to reshape the religious practice or even the entire character of Judaism. Yet, no doubt, he was far more sagacious as a philologist than profound as a theologian. Graetz's passionate temper which sometimes inclined him to partiality, though often detrimental to his activity as an historian, illustrates the saying: "The best that study of history can grant us is enthusiasm." And, last but not least, S. D. Luzzatto. He ranked as a scholar among the foremost of his century, and at the same time, possessed an attitude to the Jewish ideals and to the Jewish cause which was full of sincere enthusiasm, faith and confidence. His mind penetrated important problems of Biblical exegesis and langauge. He, indeed, was a pioneer of modern Hebrew, and his soul embraced the questions of religious belief and the survival of his people as his innermost personal concern.

Nevertheless, the main trend of mind which stuck to antiquarianism was so strong and irresistible that even these exceptional personalities made less impression by their efforts to instil new life into Judaism than by their accomplishments in historiography. These accomplishments seemed to constitute the very essence of a "serious" approach to Judaism. Thinkers who tried to espouse the Jewish idea from the viewpoint of yearning for a satisfactory *Weltanschauung* were considered by the professionals as outsiders or were entirely ignored. At the threshold of emancipation Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem" posed the question, how tradition could be maintained when the Jews were entering European culture, no doubt the most important question that could be asked at that juncture. Who paid attention to this book? How many competent critics did it find? One of the very few to take notice of Mendelssohn's theory was Saul Ascher in Berlin, a political writer of the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries. He was the first to lay the foundation for religious Liberalism and Reform in his polemics against "Jerusalem." He is completely forgotten. Scientific and detailed projects were proposed to establish a system of Jewish religion and ethics based on contemporary philosophic thought. Kant and the *"Deutsche Idealismus"* were then dominant powers in the realm of spirit and their influence was by no means restricted to Germany. S. L. Steinheim was a poor writer, but a profound thinker. His voluminous books about the "System of the Synagogue" undertook to penetrate to the very heart of the problem of Revelation and its specifically Jewish solution. Formstecher, Samuel Hirsch, Nachman Crochmal, were followers of Schelling or of Hegel. Nachman Crochmal was reasonable enough to write in Hebrew, so that at least the Eastern Haskalah kept him in mind. But the others, and many of minor importance, can scarcely even be said to have been forgotten, since hardly any one had even taken note of them.

Nevertheless, their endeavors merited

comparison with those of our classic medieval philosophers. Both exhibit the same tendency to clear the way for Judaism from the standpoint of universal world-encompassing thought. But Abraham Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Chasdai Crescas, etc., found commentators and supercommentators. They were liked or disliked, but they were read. The hatred against Maimonides kindled a fire which devoured the pages of his work. But, it is more conducive to the influence of a book to be burnt on the pyre than to be eaten by bookworms or dust. This is not said in disparagement of the antiquarians who take every precaution against the dangers which may destroy the bodies of books. In the Middle Ages passionate pro's and con's betrayed that the readers were dealing with questions in which they felt the very lifeblood of religion to be running. In the modern era, the ideas were recorded, sagaciously described; their origin was thoroughly examined, and then they were—pigeonholed.

The Influence of Zionism on Jewish Scholarship

Indeed, learned research, vital though it be, cannot *produce life.* True, life produces mental and spiritual achievements which, in turn, are able to *reshape life.* Judaism was not dead, as many of its scholarly liquidators in the nineteenth century supposed. When, by the end of that period, modern nationalism awoke, learning obtained a new meaning. In the fierce struggle for or against Zionism, Judaism as a living organism became little by little the object of spiritual endeavor. Hermann Cohen, the last and greatest thinker of the liberal era, created a synthesis of Kantian and Biblical ideas. As a monument of the time, it will survive, as did Maimonides' attempt to unite medieval Aristotelianism with Rabbinism. It stirred up many Jewish souls, those of Zionists with whom he fought vehemently even more than those of lukewarm liberals. Franz Rosenzweig's writings were eagerly discussed in circles of youth who looked for light and found it in spite of the obscurity of his baroque style.

No less important than the works which tried to bring about a system of modern Judaism were and are the accomplishments in the fields of social and political investigation, which were stimulated by the new movement. We emphasized the fact that Zunz's program had by no means overlooked those tasks, nor had they been completely neglected by the master's disciples. As a matter of fact, the governments and authorities of the states with considerable Jewish population had always needed and set up statistical tabulations for fiscal reasons. Yet historical investigation is one thing; another is the collection of data in behalf of revenue offices and tax collectors; still another, methodical research in demography, the economic, educational, hygienic, racial conditions, etc., to which competent representatives of the people itself are devoted. Particularly, if this people wants to go on living in the future and so has to learn its present situation. Many of these tasks were suggested and partly solved in ways basically different from those of the professional *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* for life itself had now become the problem.

An indispensable component of that life is the attitude which we who think, feel, and act today assume or should assume to the idea of Judaism. That the historian has a task to fulfil is clear, and that his business is to be done according to the methodical principles of his discipline is no less obvious. But he should not be almighty, he should not exercise unlimited sovereignty over the pages of our few scientific magazines and periodicals. Why is any foolish opuscule penned in the Middle Ages entitled to engage the

minds of serious scholars whereas an eludicating but modern work about a present-day theological topic is deemed beneath his attention? Why are we *scientifically* engrossed only in such problems as: What does Judaism mean to Rabbenu Tam? and not in the question: What does it mean to us? Systematic research has not yet conquered its due place in the field of Jewish learning. Such is the aftermath of the merely antiquarian tendency which dominated our study in the nineteenth century.

Scholarship for Our Day

Many of our men of research—talmudists, historians, philologists, biblical scholars—look down with slight disdain even upon well founded scientific attempts to build up a system of our present thought. The weakness and inconsistency of our modern theology, orthodox as well as liberal, is closely connected with that deficiency. As an old-fashioned halakist, a *hariph,* used to smile at flighty agadists who, in his opinion, wasted precious time by their reveries, so an historian of that school thinks about modern disquisitions on the Jewish spirit. That is regarded as homiletics, and, if the subtlety of the problems set forth occasionally requires some mental exertion on the part of the reader, as unattractive preaching. But sermons, interesting or dull, have nothing in common with "learning." They pertain to what *is or should be. Truth,* the subject and goal of *genuine science,* lies in the past alone, and its pursuit demands the excavation of old books and the analysis of the opinions contained therein.

Yet, we cannot live upon mere reminiscenses; the less so, when they appeal only to our intellect, which gathers facts in order to combine them into a picture of a world that is gone forever. To the pious scholar of olden days, the "questions of Abaya and Raba" meant an immediate reality, part and parcel of Jewish existence itself. Study was a divine service as important as prayer. It was the very heart of present and future life. To modern antiquarians, too, intellectual labor, practised with boundless devotion, often becomes a kind of religion. Living like a monk in his study cell with his books and his notes, he is an ascetic as was the old *matmid* who finally had his coffin made of the wood of his study table. But, on second consideration, we realize that this similarity is an external one, that the ascetism of intellectual toil is but a substitute for the ancient religious learning, a mere *ersatz* religion.

The legacy of rabbinical Judaism was not inherited by the *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* no matter whether this *Wissenschaft* was represented by professional rabbis or learned laymen. As for Jewish temperament, sentiment, emotion, action, alertness, Hermann Cohen, rather than Salomon Munk, was the heir of Maimonides. This is true, though several annotations of Munk's "Moreh" reveal more insight into the true development of medieval thought than entire volumes of other writers; and Cohen's interpretation of Maimonides' dectrines is something more than daring, when viewed from an historical standpoint.

Be that as it may, we not only *have* history, we *are* history. We have to *live* our life, not merely to *reflect* on past life. To disclose the relics of our ancient life and thought does not even require the work of *Jewish* scholars. Any intelligent person trained for that task is able to perform it, though love may be a better guide than scientific coldness and "neutrality."

The traditionalist Jew established his world within the four cubits of the *halakah.* That may have been a narrow world, but for him it was a soulful reality. The world has become infinitely wider. By now, we are aware, in the midst of

the greatest crisis of history, in which we are more deeply involved than any other people, that we are not yet dead. Therefore, to deal with the Jewish cause cannot mean to dedicate obituaries to its representatives. It must mean, first, that modern learning is not to be restricted to investigation of the past; second, that the system of Judaism and the attempts to build it up *for our time* are not to be treated by our scholars as so much tolerated *agadah,* but as possessing primary importance; third, that all basic expressions of our present life have to be recognized by the representatives of Jewish *Wissenschaft* — its schools, academies, scientific institutions, and those who support them—as worthy topics of Jewish learning.

Upon what basis can any Reconstructionist movement erect a solid structure for Jewish life if not on faith in the present and the future of Judaism? Every generation should have the courage and the enthusiasm to say and to fulfil: *"L'Histoire c'est moi!,"* "We *are* History."

Book Notes

By Theodore N. Lewis

"BRANDEIS ON ZIONISM," the Zionist Organization of America. 156 *pages.*
"WHY A JEWISH STATE," Leon I. Feuer. Richard R. Smith. 94 *pages.*
"PALESTINE AND JEWISH FREEDOM," Poale Zion Organization. 64 *pages.*
"ANCIENT ALIYOT," Cecil Roth. Scopus Publishing Company. 57 *pages.*

THE Brandeis volume is exceptionally timely in view of the recently organized "American Council for Judaism" for the specific purpose of opposing the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine. The addresses constitute a superb reply to all the "reasons" against Zionism, which, despite age and obsolescence, are again offered to the American Jewish community by a dissident minority of anti-Zionist Reform Rabbis and assimilationist laymen.

One of the most dangerous contentions of the enemies of Zion is that Zionism conflicts with Americanism. Indeed it is the pathological fear that civic status may be endangered which is the subconscious and primary motive for all anti-Zionist prejudices and activities. The alleged reasons are but rationalizations of this basic anxiety touching the charge of dual allegiance and hyphenated loyalties. No more powerful reply to this fear—foolish as it is shameful—exists than the life and career of Brandeis. His personality forms the most concrete refutation of the base calumny that Zionism conflicts with Americanism. Not only did the venerable jurist not find even a shadow of a contradiction between the two ideals, but to him Zionism was a logical corollary of Americanism. In one of the most memorable statements dealing with this theme, Brandeis publicly confessed that his "approach to Zionism was through Americanism" and that it "gradually became clear to me that to be good Americans we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews we must become Zionists."

The late Justice equated Americanism with Zionism because of a noble conception of Americanism, a conception on a par with that held by Jefferson, Lincoln and Roosevelt, and basically a vision of human brotherhood, of economic justice,

of universal liberty. Americanism, according to Brandeis, is not a matter of external change, such as acquisition of language, customs, manners, etc. Americanization involves "fundamental changes." Only a true and noble democrat, only one profoundly sensitive to the spiritual implications of American democracy, could declare that "many a poor immigrant comes to us from distant lands, ignorant of our land, strange, in tattered clothes with jarring manners, who is already truly American in its most important sense . . . who has long shared our ideals and has yearned for our land of liberty and for the opportunity of seeing the realization of its aims." They who monotonously intone the wicked refrain that Zionism and Americanism conflict not only misrepresent Judaism but insult the spirit of American tradition.

The best known address in the volume, certainly one of the most comprehensive statements on Zionism, is that entitled "The Jewish Problem—How to Solve It." It has been reprinted frequently in part or in full and has become a classic in Zionist literature. The fundamental thesis of the address is that Jews constitute a nationality which has met, as it still does, with universal oppression and injustice, and that the only remedy for this abnormal situation is the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Jewish leaders who reject the major conclusions of this penetrating analysis of Jewish life do not merit the confidence of American Jewry.

"Not by Charity Alone" is an essay which is of perennial and today of crucial importance. The very title is a rebuke to our professional philanthropists, who think of the Jewish problem exclusively in terms of charity, for whom, as Herzl noted in his diary, "Jewish charity has become a machine for the suppression of the cry of misery." Brandeis most emphatically agreed with this opinion of the founder of political Zionism. "No amount of philanthropy can ever remove social injustice unless we first remove its causes." For the social injustices from which the Jew suffers, Zionism alone is the cure, since it "seeks to give him liberty, and not only . . . liberty but . . . standing in the world without which no legal declaration of liberty will be of serious moment." (page 85). What prophetic words! Without a favorable public opinion the most solemn legal declarations are worthless—as we have learned to our sorrow.

"Why a Jewish State," by Leon I. Feuer is an excellent presentation by one of the younger men in the Reform Rabbinate of the case for a Jewish state in Palestine. The author disposes of many of the "traditional," obsolete and dishonest arguments against the creation of a Jewish commonwealth, and, in the ninth chapter, presents the essence of his theme. Only the creation of a Jewish state will complete the emancipation of the individual Jew, which, without the liberation of the Jewish people, is a fraud and a mockery. The author challenges those who contend that the Jews are not a nation but only a religion with a mission, that they create a favorable environment for the realization of the mission.

Is it not a fact that universal hatred and injustice prevent the Jew from discharging his divinely appointed task? An oppressed and hounded people, always and everywhere insecure, cannot fulfill any mission. It is cruel and fantastic to expect it of them. Highly significant is the fact that, in the Diaspora, those isolated Jewish communities which are emancipated and whose individual members are nominally free are particularly impatient with the avowed mission of Israel and hasten to reject it lest they irritate their Gentile neighbors and stimulate anti-Jewish prejudices.

Only frightened Jews, cowed and intimidated, act thus. Did any Amer-

icans of Irish descent oppose the establishment of the Irish Free State lest it compromise their American loyalties? Does any Roman Catholic deny the temporal and spiritual sovereignty of the Pope? The truth is that Jewish *homelessness* has disqualified Israel, has rendered the Jews morally unprepared, for any *mission*. The concept is ludicrous in the Diaspora. In Palestine only can it possess meaning and challenge, as is evidenced by the moral heroism of the *halutzim* and their embrace of the prophetic ideals of social righteousness.

"Palestine and Jewish Freedom" issued by the Palestine Labor Group contains four worthwhile articles on Palestine. Particularly timely is David Ben Gurion's contribution on "Palestine in the Post-War World," which defines accurately the Arab problem as "the political opposition of the Arabs to Jewish immigration into Palestine." The discussion of the possibility of a bi-national state and of population transfers is exceedingly pertinent. It should serve as an effective antidote to the poisonous propaganda disseminated by Dr. Magnes, propaganda which, though highly injurious to Jewish aspirations, has yet to win even a single adherent among Arab leaders.

Cecil Roth's pamphlet, "Ancient Aliyot," is not directly related to the foregoing publication. Indirectly it is, and in a most fascinating and decisive manner, since it bears eloquent testimony to the perennial yearning of Jews in all lands and in all times for Palestine. Dr. Roth's study deals with the instinctive turning of the medieval Jew—Italian, Spanish, English—to the holy land when in need of a home, even as Jewish refugees do this very day.

These Zionist publications should serve a double purpose; they should increase our knowledge of Zionism, and our love for and devotion to Eretz Yisrael, to the end that it may become the home for our people *bimherah b'yamenu*—speedily, and in our day.

Correspondence

Strengthening the Zionist Movement

Sirs:

I wonder whether true lovers of Palestine are conscious of the setbacks which the Zionist movement has suffered in this country. The outlook is grave and calls for radical steps to be taken immediately in order to remedy the situation. Specifically I call attention to two evils.

First, the highly objectionable publicity of the Committee for a Jewish Army has harmed tremendously the cause of Zionism and Palestine. It has alienated Jews and Christians who had previously been friendly to the Jewish Homeland. It will take years of propaganda to undo the damage—this is the opinion of many responsible Zionists with whom I discussed the subject.

Second, the manpower of the Zionist organization is constantly drained by the American Jewish Congress. Henceforth it will be more difficult than ever to raise large sums for Palestine because many of the best workers are devoting their energies to the Congress. This is particularly tragic when one bears in mind that the Congress was created and is still sponsored by a number of leading Zionists.

There are, of course, differences between the Emergency Committee for Zionist Affairs and the Committee for a Jewish Army, but I am convinced that something could be done in order to cause the latter to stop its harmful publicity.

As to the Congress, no one will deny that many of its activities are highly important but for the sake of efficiency the Congress and the Zionist Organization ought to merge. The large majority of Congressists are loyal Zionists and, if the leaders, too, should advocate a merger the masses would follow. Some would balk but they are numerically too weak to go against an overwhelming majority.

The Reconstructionist movement has made a rejuvenated Palestine one of its basic credos. I therefore urge you to raise your voice mightily against the tactics of the Committee for a Jewish Army, and for the amalgamation of the American Jewish Congress with the Zionist Organization. Such a step would bring new life to American Jewry. In European countries the Zionist organization embodied every phase of Jewish endeavor. The same can be accomplished in America.

S. Felix Mendelsohn,
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